

PARALLELIUM

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INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

RUTH, 25, stands before a hallway door. She stares dead eyed at the doorknob. She continually jiggles it, even though the door is locked.

She knocks on the door and jiggles the knob harder. She is rail thin. Dark circles line under her eyes.

CRYSTAL, 25, walks out of a bedroom and up to Ruth. Crystal is in her pajamas and groggy with sleep.

CRYSTAL

Ruth?

Crystal watches as Ruth jiggles the knob, over and over. Crystal gently puts her hand on Ruth's.

CRYSTAL (cont'd)

There's nothing in there.

Ruth takes no notice of Crystal.

CRYSTAL (cont'd)

Come on, let's go. There's nothing in there.

RUTH

(mumbling)

I have to clean it.

CRYSTAL

Clean what?

RUTH

(mumbling)

The blood. It's everywhere.

CRYSTAL

Let's go back to bed.

Crystal gently puts her hands on Ruth's shoulders. She turns her and guides her down the hall. Ruth, sleepwalking, blankly goes along.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Crystal guides Ruth back to her bed. Ruth crawls into bed and Crystal tucks her in.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Crystal unlocks the door Ruth had been trying to open. She looks inside. Nothing unusual. Just an office with a desk, typewriter, and chair.

It's immaculately clean. Even the pencils on the desk are perfectly straight, lined up, and spaced out.

Crystal closes and locks the door.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Ruth paces back and forth. Her body is WIRED with agitation. She's tense, her face is twisted up with frustration, and she's mumbling to herself.

Everything in her room is cleaned, organized, and perfectly arranged. Even the books are arranged by size and color.

A KNOCK on her door. Another KNOCK.

CRYSTAL (O.S.)

Ruth? I brought you your tea. Can I come in?

Ruth paces and mumbles. She throws an icy glare at the door as it opens.

Crystal enters holding a cup of tea.

CRYSTAL

Good morning.

Ruth stares at her in silence. Crystal holds the tea cup out to Ruth. She doesn't take it.

CRYSTAL (cont'd)

I made lavender chamomile this morning. I thought we could try something new.

RUTH

What are you talking about?

CRYSTAL

So we normally have green in the morning, but I was thinking -

RUTH

I don't drink tea.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRYSTAL

You quit?

RUTH

No. I never started.

CRYSTAL

What do you mean? We have tea together every morning. It's our thing.

RUTH

That's your thing. I hate tea. I only drink coffee.

CRYSTAL

Oh. I - okay. That's - huh. Okay. Are you sure you don't want it?

(no response)

Do you mind if I drink it?

Ruth ignores her. Crystal takes a sip of the tea. At the SLURP sound Ruth's anger amps up into RAGE.

RUTH

Do you have to do that so loud?

CRYSTAL

Do what?

RUTH

Slurp your tea.

CRYSTAL

Are you okay?

RUTH

Fine.

CRYSTAL

Are you sure?

Ruth glares at Crystal.

CRYSTAL (cont'd)

I just ask because you were sleep walking again. I'm staring to think it's some kind of stress response. I was googling it and -

RUTH

Google isn't a medical resource. It's a bunch of shit written for clicks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CRYSTAL

I'm just trying to understand it.

RUTH

Why? It's not your problem. You're not the one sleepwalking.

CRYSTAL

No. But it does wake me up. And it's getting more frequent. Even after we locked the den, you still -

RUTH

You locked it? Why?

CRYSTAL

That's where you go when you sleepwalk. And once you're in there, you get extremely... well, you know.

RUTH

No, I don't know. I get what?

CRYSTAL

Are you sure you're okay?

RUTH

I'm not the one who's not making any sense.

CRYSTAL

We just talked about this a few days ago. I told you how upset you get when you go in there at night. You're like a different person. Last time you attacked Gabe, so we decided to put a lock on the door. You agreed it was a good idea.

RUTH

I never said that.

CRYSTAL

You helped us to install it.

RUTH

Why the fuck would I do that? That makes no sense.

CRYSTAL

You really don't remember any of this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

RUTH
So where's the key?

Crystal takes a long sip of her tea.

RUTH (cont'd)
What? I'm not allowed to have a key to my own den? That's fucking ridiculous! You do know this is MY house right? You and Gabe are just guests here.

CRYSTAL
You told me to hide it from you.

RUTH
I would never say that. Why are you lying?

CRYSTAL
I'm not - I'm -

From downstairs a SAW runs and then HAMMERING.

RUTH
What is all that NOISE!?

Ruth rushes out of the bedroom. As she does, she accidentally bumps into Crystal, spilling the hot tea all over Crystal.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

GABE (29) hammers a board into place. He's a handsome and fit man in jeans and a work shirt.

Ruth storms in. She looks at the renovation in process in shock and horror. Boards are everywhere. The sink has been ripped out. The whole kitchen is a MESS.

RUTH
Stop! STOP IT!

Ruth rips the hammer out of Gabe's hand.

GABE
What the hell? I was using that.

RUTH
What have you done to the kitchen?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gabe looks at her in total confusion. Crystal comes in, her shirt wet with tea. Gabe looks to her.

GABE
She's sleepwalking again.

RUTH
I am NOT asleep.

GABE
Come on, let's get you back to bed.

Gabe reaches out for Ruth. She jerks away.

CRYSTAL
She's not asleep.

GABE
What's going on with you?

RUTH
Are you serious? You ripped out my kitchen! How could you do that without asking me? Fucking hell! You show up here and act like you own the place. You can't just start changing stuff.

GABE
I am so confused. What's happening right now?

Crystal shrugs.

RUTH
Just put it back! All of it!

GABE
I can't put it back. I'm half way through the renovation.

RUTH
God damn it, Gabe! You ruin everything.

Ruth grabs a power drill and walks out.

GABE
What the fuck was that?

CRYSTAL
I have no idea.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Ruth drills into the screws on the lock on the den door. She takes it off. She enters with a basket full of cleaning supplies. She sprays cleaner over the desk and wipes it down.

As she does so, she continually looks at the typewriter.

INT. DEN - DAY

Ruth stands over the desk, staring down into a typewriter. Her eyes are glazed over. She stares down motionless as a WAH WAH WAH WAH sound radiates from the typewriter.

LATER:

Ruth scrubs furiously at a threadbare carpet before the desk. Her thin body struggles with the effort to wash something away. Something only she sees - the carpet is perfectly clean.

Her unwashed hair falls in her face with each frantic movement. A cloud of darkness surrounds her; there is no warmth or happiness to her.

She sprays down more cleaner. She scrubs like her life depends on it.

Someone knocks at the door. Crystal pushes open the door, now missing it's lock.

CRYSTAL

Ruth? Hey, um, I just -

RUTH

I'm busy. Go away.

Ruth ignores Crystal and continues scrubbing. Crystal walks out as Ruth scrubs and mumbles to herself.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Crystal opens the closet. She takes off the shirt soaked in tea. She puts on a clean one.

She looks around and closes the door.

INT. CLOSET - DAY

Crystal's eyes are wide and she keeps looking around and listening for something.

She moves aside several boxes. She looks around again.

She grabs a shoebox from the back. She opens it to reveal there's a fifth of vodka hidden inside.

She puts it to her lips and takes a long drink. Relief washes over her.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Gabe looks for something in the dresser. The closet door opens. Crystal comes out and is alarmed to see Gabe there.

CRYSTAL

Oh - hey - I was just...

GABE

Hiding in the closet?

CRYSTAL

I wasn't hiding. It's just quiet in there.

GABE

Have you seen my wallet?

CRYSTAL

No.

GABE

Can you help me find it?

CRYSTAL

I need to get going to class.

GABE

Then can I borrow some money?

CRYSTAL

What for?

GABE

I want to get a hamster for Ruth.

CRYSTAL

A hamster? Why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GABE

She had one when we were kids. It'll help to cheer her up.

CRYSTAL

She doesn't need cheering up. She needs to talk to someone. There's something serious going on with her.

GABE

She's fine. She just needs to get out of her head a little.

CRYSTAL

She's not fine. She's having these weird memory problems. And she gets so angry. I've never seen her like that before.

GABE

She just lost her mom. She's going through something. But she's smart and she's strong. She'll work it out.

CRYSTAL

Gabe, she didn't just "lose" her mom, she watched her die. In that den that she keeps going into and cleaning. You don't you think that's -

GABE

We'll talk about it later. I know you gotta get going. I just need like twenty bucks for the hamster. And I'll need a cage. And food. Can I just borrow your debit card?

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Gabe fills a small animal water feeder. He puts it on a cage with a hamster.

Crystal walks in with her backpack.

GABE

Hey. How was school?

CRYSTAL

Good. I'm exhausted. I really need to start sleeping better.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GABE
So what do you think?

Gabe motions to the hamster.

CRYSTAL
It's cute. What did Ruth say?

GABE
She hasn't seen it yet. I figured I would lure her down here with promises of food and surprise her.

CRYSTAL
Do we have food?

GABE
I grabbed some on the way home.

Gabe motions to a couple bags of fast food.

CRYSTAL
I'll let her know. I need to put my bag away.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Crystal knocks on Ruth's door. She opens the door.

CRYSTAL
Ruth?

INT. RUTH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Crystal peers in. No one is in there.

INT. DEN - NIGHT

Crystal opens the door to the den.

Ruth is asleep at the desk, her face on her arms. Crystal touches her shoulder. Ruth doesn't move.

Crystal touches her harder and tries to get her to wake up.

CRYSTAL
Ruth. Hey, wake up. Ruth. RUTH!

Ruth bolts up and gasps. She looks around in fear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RUTH
What's happening? Where am I?

CRYSTAL
You're in the den.

RUTH
What am I doing in here? I thought
you locked it.

CRYSTAL
We did. But then you took the lock
off.

RUTH
I did? When?

CRYSTAL
Earlier today.

RUTH
Are you sure it was me?

CRYSTAL
Yeah. It was weird. I've never seen
you like that before. At least not
when you're awake.

RUTH
What was I like?

CRYSTAL
Like -

Ruth jumps up and looks around the room. She opens the small closet.

RUTH
Where is she?

CRYSTAL
Where's who?

RUTH
Mom!

CRYSTAL
Ruth, she's gone.

RUTH
No, she's not! She's hiding! Where is
she?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CRYSTAL

She died a few months ago. Remember?

Ruth shakes her head and covers her face with her hands.

RUTH

No no no no. She was HERE. I saw her.
She scratched me. SEE.

Ruth lifts her shirt sleeve. There are four DEEP scratches on her arm.

CRYSTAL

Oh my god. How did you -

RUTH

I didn't. It wasn't me. It was mom.
She cornered me and I was trying to
run away.

(then)

Don't look at me like that.

CRYSTAL

I'm sorry. I don't know what to say.

(then)

Why don't you come get some dinner?
You need to eat something.

RUTH

I saw her. She was in here, begging
me not to leave. When I tried to
leave she flipped out and attacked
me. I can still feel her. She's here.
She's watching us.

(then)

You feel it too. I can tell.

Crystal looks around uncomfortably.

CRYSTAL

It always feels weird in here. It was
probably just a dream. I do the same
thing. Sometimes I wake up with marks
in my palms from digging my nails
into myself all night.

Ruth looks at the scratches more.

CRYSTAL (cont'd)

Come on. Gabe's waiting for us.

RUTH

Why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CRYSTAL

You'll see.

Ruth walks out. Crystal is about to follow. But then she sees a bunch of pages have been typed in the typewriter. She leans in and tries to read them.

All she sees is HELP ME before Ruth grabs her arm.

RUTH

You coming?

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ruth has covered her eyes. Crystal is leading her in.

CRYSTAL

A little further. A little more.
Okay. And stop. And open your eyes!

Ruth opens them. She sees the little hamster.

GABE

Ta da!

Ruth comes over and looks in. Her face lights up.

GABE (cont'd)

What do you think?

RUTH

He looks just like Mr. Tuddle!

Ruth opens the cage. She grabs the hamster and holds him.

RUTH (cont'd)

He's so cute. I love him. Thank you.

GABE

You're welcome. I figured you could use some cheering up after this morning.

RUTH

What happened this morning?

GABE

You were pretty upset about the kitchen. And I just want you to know, I'm ahead of schedule. I should be done by next week, and then I can move onto the bathroom.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GABE (cont'd)

And then we can finally put this place up for sale.

RUTH

I still can't believe we're selling the house.

CRYSTAL

But you still want to, right?

RUTH

Oh yeah. I can't wait to get out of here.

GABE

Me too.

CRYSTAL

Me three.

GABE

So what'll you name him?

RUTH

I guess I'll call him George.

Ruth holds George, smiling and in love with him.

INT. RUTH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ruth puts the hamster cage on her nightstand. She changes into her pajamas.

She hears a door close in the hall.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ruth looks into the hall.

RUTH

Gabe?

(then)

Crystal?

The den door is closed. It was open when they left.

RUTH (cont'd)

Hello?

Ruth walks down the hall. She opens the door and looks in. She walks in.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gabe and Crystal change into their pajamas and get ready for bed.

GABE

I told you she'd like the hamster.

CRYSTAL

You're right. It was a good idea. But we should still talk about what happened. You're both holding so much in. It's not good.

GABE

I'm fine.

CRYSTAL

You're working nonstop from morning until night.

GABE

Yeah, so I can get us out of this fucking house.

CRYSTAL

Or to distract yourself from what you're feeling.

GABE

The only thing I'm feeling is exhausted. I need to get some sleep.

CRYSTAL

You still haven't even told me exactly what happened that night. How did Cynthia -

GABE

I don't want to relive it. It's over. Mom's gone and that's all we need to know. It's all finally over.

(then)

Good night.

Gabe kisses Crystal and then turns off the light.

Crystal lays in bed staring up. She waits until Gabe is asleep. She goes into the closet.

INT. CLOSET - NIGHT

Crystal takes a long drink of vodka.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Crystal is about to get back in bed. She stops and opens the door.

INT. DEN - NIGHT

Ruth stands at the desk, just staring down into the typewriter

WAH WAH WAH

Crystal opens the door and comes in. She sees the way Ruth stares down, eyes open, without moving. She tries to turn Ruth, to get her to walk away, but she won't budge on inch.

Crystal reaches out for the paper so she can see what's typed on it. Ruth suddenly GRABS her wrist hard.

RUTH
Don't touch that.

CRYSTAL
I'm sorry.

RUTH
She's here.

CRYSTAL
Who is?

RUTH
Mom.

Crystal looks around.

CRYSTAL
No one's here.

Ruth gasps and goes limp.

RUTH
Crystal? What's going on?

CRYSTAL
You were sleepwalking. Come on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Crystal leads Ruth back to her bedroom.

INT. DEN - NIGHT

Crystal returns to the den alone. She looks around.

She pulls the paper out and reads it. It's a long, almost incoherent stream of consciousness with several words that jump out, such as: HELP ME - It's getting worse - I'm trapped here and I don't know what to do - sometimes I wish it would all end - why is this happening? - I need help but I have no one.

Crystal looks around, as if something has caught her attention.

She goes to the little closet door. She puts her hand on the knob. She whips the door open.

Nothing.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Crystal gets back into bed with Gabe. She lays awake, staring up, thinking.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Crystal turns on the shower. She opens the cabinet below the sink. She grabs a box of tampons from the back. From inside, she pulls out an airplane size bottle of rum.

She chugs it down. She hides the empty bottle at the bottom of the trash.

INT. DEN - NIGHT

Crystal, in her robe and with wet hair, walks in. Ruth isn't there. The room is empty.

She looks at the typewriter. She walks over to it. She stares down into it. The pages that had been typed on are gone.

She presses some keys and looks around.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRYSTAL

Hello?

(then)

Cynthia?

(then)

Give me a sign if you're here.

Nothing happens.

She turns around to see Ruth STARING at her, dead eyed. Ruth silently goes into her bedroom and closes the door.

INT. BATHROOM

Ruth obsessively washes her hands. Once done, she sees a spot of something on the ground.

LATER:

Ruth has scrubbed down the entire bathroom.

Finally done, she lifts up the bag to take the trash out (the bag is clear plastic). She sees the empty rum bottle in the bottom.

She pulls it out and puts it in her pocket.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Crystal turns on the NEW faucet sink. She fills a glass with water.

CRYSTAL

Good morning. How do you like our new sink? Gabe just finished.

RUTH

Where is he?

CRYSTAL

He went to get some parts.

Ruth puts down the trash.

RUTH

Can we talk?

CRYSTAL

Yes. I would love that. I've been wanting to, but I didn't know if you were ready.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRYSTAL (cont'd)
I can't imagine what you're going
through, after that night, and -

Ruth and Crystal sit down at the table. Ruth takes the
little alcohol bottle out of her pocket. She puts it on the
table.

Crystal's face drops as she realizes this conversation isn't
about Ruth - it's about Crystal.

CRYSTAL (cont'd)
Where did you get that?

RUTH
I won't tell Gabe. I just want to
know what's going on.

CRYSTAL
It's not what you think.

RUTH
You were doing so good. What
happened?

CRYSTAL
What happened? Are you serious? Why
do you and Gabe keep acting like
NOTHING happened? I feel like I'm
going crazy!

RUTH
Have you called your sponsor?

CRYSTAL
No. Not yet. I will later. I need to
get going. I have class.

RUTH
Crystal, wait.

Crystal runs out.

Gabe comes in with a bag from the hardware store.

GABE
What's up with Crystal?

RUTH
I don't know.
(then)
Do you think I could help today?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GABE
You want to help?

RUTH
Sure. It'll be like old times.

GABE
Great! Let's do it. Grab those screws
over there.

LATER:

Gabe and Ruth work on the kitchen together. They install a
new counter and work on new cabinets.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Crystal comes home.

CRYSTAL
I'm home!

GABE (O.S.)
In here!

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Crystal comes in to see how much progress they've made. It's
just Gabe - Ruth is in the bathroom.

CRYSTAL
Wow. It looks amazing!

GABE
Ruth helped.

CRYSTAL
That's surprising. And don't say it's
because of the hamster.

GABE
I'm telling you, that little guy was
worth every penny. I hear her talking
to him at night. I think it's helping
her to come back out of her shell.

CRYSTAL
Are you sure she's talking to the
hamster?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GABE
Who else would she be talking to?

CRYSTAL
I don't know. Where is she?

GABE
She went to take a shower. She must
be getting dressed.

INT. BEDROOM CLOSET - DAY

Crystal takes a long drink of vodka.

INT. HALLWAY (OUTSIDE DEN) - NIGHT

Crystal, holding a sandwich and chips, stops outside the den door. She puts her ear against it. She hears a soft voice.

CRYSTAL
Ruth?

No response, but Crystal can hear Ruth whispering to someone.

CRYSTAL (cont'd)
Ruth, you okay? I'm coming in.

The whispering stops.

INT. DEN - NIGHT

Ruth stands over the typewriter, eyes glazed, staring down.
WAH WAH WAH WAH WAH

She jumps and looks around when Crystal touches her shoulder. Ruth turns around, a HARD expression on her face. This is angry Ruth.

CRYSTAL
I brought you a sandwich. I figured
you'd be hungry after all the work
you did today.

RUTH
I'm not hungry.

CRYSTAL
Who were you talking to?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RUTH

No one.

CRYSTAL

I heard a voice.

RUTH

What did it sound like?

CRYSTAL

You. It sounded like you, whispering.

RUTH

It wasn't me.

CRYSTAL

But I heard -

RUTH

You're hearing things. No one was talking.

CRYSTAL

Okay. I'll just leave this -

Crystal reaches to put the sandwich on the desk.

RUTH

No! I just cleaned there. Are you trying to make me start all over?

CRYSTAL

Okay. Here.

Crystal holds the sandwich out.

RUTH

I don't want it. I just want you to get out.

CRYSTAL

Is this about earlier? I know you're mad. And disappointed. I just want to say thank you for not telling Gabe. I'm going to tell him. And I'm going to get help.

RUTH

I don't know what you're talking about, just get out!

Ruth grabs Crystal and forces her toward the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CRYSTAL

Ow! Ruth, you're hurting me!

The sandwich and chips fall on the floor during the commotion. A rage so full of fury comes over Ruth's face that Crystal backs up in fear.

CRYSTAL (cont'd)

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I didn't mean -

Ruth shoves Crystal out and then slams the door.

INT. HALLWAY

Crystal takes a few steps and stops. She returns to the door.

She hears typing. She stands at the door, listening.

The door WHIPS open.

RUTH

What?

CRYSTAL

I was just wondering what you're writing?

RUTH

None of your fucking business.

The door SLAMS shut.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Crystal comes in with the sandwich and chips.

GABE

What? What happened?

CRYSTAL

There's something I need to tell you.

GABE

Okay.

Crystal looks down.

GABE (cont'd)

Is it about Ruth?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRYSTAL

No. Yeah. It's...

(then)

It's nothing. I should go study. I have an exam tomorrow.

GABE

Hey, hold on. I just want to tell you how proud I am of you.

CRYSTAL

For what?

GABE

Going back to get your degree. That's huge, and I haven't really said anything. I should have. You're doing great, and I just want you to know that.

CRYSTAL

Thank you. I appreciate that.

GABE

I really mean it. You've been through a lot, it's not easy to keep going after all you've been through. And you're so good at being supportive to me and Ruth and pretty much everyone. I want to do the same for you.

CRYSTAL

Thank you. That means a lot to hear you say that.

GABE

You're going to be the best high school guidance counselor. Those kids will be lucky to have you.

CRYSTAL

I hope so. I just want to do for them what I wish someone had done for me.

Gabe gives Crystal a big hug.

GABE

I'll be upstairs soon. I'm just going to do a few more things and then call it a day.

Crystal leaves. Gabe takes out his tape measure and returns to working, even though it's after 8PM.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Crystal comes into the hall. The door to the den is open. Ruth's bedroom door is closed.

Crystal goes to the den.

INT. DEN - NIGHT

Crystal looks at the typewriter. Something is written on the page. She pulls the paper out and reads it.

CRYSTAL (READING)

I miss her.

Who?

Mom. I don't know who I am without her.

Maybe that's a good thing. Now you can find out who you really are without your whole existence being centered around her.

You don't understand. It's not just that I don't know who I am. It's like I'm untethered. I feel like I'm not here. Like I've become disconnected from my own self. I feel like I'm floating in the air, and my mind and body are down here, and I'm just watching. It's so hard to explain. It's terrifying.

But you're FREE. Every day I think about leaving. I think about what my life would be like if I could just get away from her.

I don't know how to come back to myself. I'm just drifting. All I feel is fear. Nothing else. I need her back. I'm nothing without her. I think I died with her that day.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Gabe sweeps up the floor. Crystal comes in and gives him the paper.

GABE

What's this?

CRYSTAL

I don't know. Ruth wrote it. I just found it in the typewriter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gabe reads the page.

GABE
I don't get it.

CRYSTAL
It's some kind of conversation. And the other day I heard whispering, like she was talking to someone.

GABE
So she talks to herself. She's always done that.

CRYSTAL
I don't just mean the mumbling she does.

GABE
Babe, it's nothing. It's just some weird writing. Ruth has always been a little weird. You know that.

CRYSTAL
Are you going to blow off everything I tell you?

GABE
I get that you're worried. But I don't see anything to be worried about. And besides, I've got way too much going on. I'm doing everything I can to get this done as fast as possible before our money runs out. Okay? Here.

Gabe crumples up the paper and throws it away.

GABE (cont'd)
There. Problem solved.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gabe and Crystal lay in bed together. They're both awake even though it's late. From down the hall, they hear the typewriter going.

GABE
I thought you said she went to bed?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRYSTAL
I thought she did. I mean her door
was closed.

INT. DEN - NIGHT

Gabe and Crystal stand outside the door.

GABE
Ruth? What are you up to?

No response.

Gabe opens the door.

Ruth stands over the typewriter, staring down.

WAH WAH WAH

GABE (cont'd)
Ruth? Ruthie? Can you hear me?

Gabe tries to move her. She won't move. Stiff as a board.

CRYSTAL
She was like this earlier.

Gabe looks down at the typewriter. He pulls the paper out.
He reads it.

GABE (READING)
I need help but I don't know where to
turn. No one understands.
I understand.
I know you do, but you're not here.
It's just me here, alone with her.
You have to leave. I know you think
you can't, but you can and have to.
But you said it was terrible
without her. Like you died. What if I
can't survive on my own?

Gabe looks up at Crystal.

CRYSTAL
Gabe...

Ruth has looked up from the typewriter. An intense look of
RAGE consumes her face. She rips the paper out of Gabe's
hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RUTH
How dare you. That's PRIVATE.

GABE
What is it?

RUTH
You wouldn't understand. Just get out.

GABE
We came in here because you woke us up. All we can hear is clack clack clack.

RUTH
Then put earplugs in.

GABE
It's 2AM. Just go to bed.

RUTH
I'm not tired.

GABE
Then get a fucking pencil and write your stories in a notebook. I'm not listening to this all night.

Gabe grabs the typewriter.

RUTH
NO! NO!

Ruth pulls at him and claws for the typewriter.

GABE
Ow! Stop it! Crystal, help me!

CRYSTAL
Ruth, let him go.

Crystal reaches for Ruth, but Ruth shoves her back HARD. Crystal goes flying backwards and crashes into a lamp. She cuts her hand on the glass from the bulb.

Gabe sees the blood.

GABE
Crystal!

Ruth grabs the typewriter. She runs out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Gabe helps Crystal up.

GABE (cont'd)
Are you okay?

CRYSTAL
I think so.

GABE
Let me see.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Gabe bandages Crystal's hand. Down the hall, they hear Ruth typing on the typewriter in her bedroom.

CLACK CLACK CLACKCLACKCLACK CLACK

CRYSTAL
Do you see it now? She's not herself.

GABE
I'll talk to her tomorrow.

CRYSTAL
What are you going to say?

GABE
I don't know.

CRYSTAL
But you'll talk to her and ask her what's going on?

GABE
Of course. She's my sister.

CRYSTAL
You can't just let her blow you off. You know you have to -

GABE
I know what to say. She's my sister. You don't have to worry so much.

INT. RUTH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ruth sits on her bed, staring at the typewriter. She pulls out the page she typed. She holds it and reads it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She puts a fresh page in. She waits. Nothing happens. She types onto the page.

RUTH (TYPING)

Just go. Leave. I know you feel like you can't, but you have to. It's the only way you can get your life back.

She lays back, reading what she typed. She tries to stay awake but she can't and drifts off to sleep.

LATER:

Ruth is sitting up in bed. She looks around, confused, trying to get her bearings.

Her arm is outstretched before her. She tries to pull it and something PULLS BACK.

She sees that her mother, CYNTHIA (45), is standing before her gripping her wrist HARD.

RUTH

Mom?

CYNTHIA

What is this?

Cynthia holds up the typed page. She reads it.

CYNTHIA (cont'd)

Just go. Leave. I know you feel like you can't, but you have to. It's the only way you can get your life back.

RUTH

Can you let go? Please?

CYNTHIA

Why did you write this to yourself?
What is it?

Ruth tries to pull herself away. Cynthia grips her harder.

RUTH

Mom, you're hurting me. Please let go.

CYNTHIA

Are you going to leave? Is that what this is?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CYNTHIA (cont'd)

Did you want me to find this so I'd know my only daughter was about to abandon me?

RUTH

No, I swear. I'd never leave you.

CYNTHIA

Everyone leaves. Your brother. Your father. You all leave. Why does everyone hate me? What's wrong with me? Am I that awful?

RUTH

No. Not at all. We love you.

Cynthia's anger AMPS up.

CYNTHIA

Don't lie to me!

RUTH

I'm not! Mom, please. You're scaring me.

Cynthia lets go. Her face softens.

CYNTHIA

I'm sorry. I just love you so much. You're the most important thing in the world to me.

RUTH

I know.

CYNTHIA

No, you don't. I would die without you. I would literally die. See.

Cynthia holds out her arm. She's bleeding from small cuts she made (nothing lethal - almost like scratches). Ruth is horrified by what she sees.

CYNTHIA (cont'd)

You're the only one I ever cared about. I don't care that they left. But you, you're special. You're so smart and funny and bright. I am so proud of you. We're going to take on the world together. Right?

Ruth nods.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CYNTHIA (cont'd)

Come here.

Cynthia wraps Ruth up in a big hug.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ruth BOLTS awake in her bed.

She looks at her wrist. A big bruise is there, as if someone roughly grabbed her. She touches her wrist. It's tender and sore.

She hears something in her closet.

RUTH

Hello?

(then)

Mom?

She slowly gets up and walks over to her closet. She nervously puts a hand on the door. She braces herself.

She opens the closet. George the hamster knocks over a pile of shoe boxes.

RUTH (cont'd)

Hey! How'd you get in there?

Ruth puts George back in his cage. She returns to bed and picks up the typewriter.

RUTH (TYPING)

Are you there? I need to talk.

(then)

I think you're in danger.

(then)

I need to know if you got my last message.

The typewriter doesn't respond.

INT. RUTH'S BEDROOM - DAY

Morning breaks outside the window. Ruth stands over the typewriter staring down.

WAH WAH WAH WAH WAH

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Gabe sands down the newly finished counter. Crystal comes in.

CRYSTAL
Good morning.

GABE
Morning.

CRYSTAL
You got an early start today.

GABE
I couldn't sleep.

CRYSTAL
Were you worried about Ruth?

Gabe shrugs.

CRYSTAL (cont'd)
She's going to be okay. But only if we're open with her about what's going on. I know it's uncomfortable, but we have to talk. About everything.

GABE
What if she doesn't want to talk?

CRYSTAL
She does. That's why she's writing that stuff. She keeps writing she needs help, help me. She's reaching out in the only way she feels she can.

Ruth comes in.

RUTH
Who's reaching out?

Crystal and Gabe look at each other.

CRYSTAL
I'll leave you two to talk. I need to get to class.

Crystal leaves.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RUTH
So how'd you take it?

GABE
Take what?

RUTH
Her confession. That's what she was
talking about, right?

GABE
What confession?

RUTH
She didn't tell you?

GABE
Tell me what?

RUTH
I kind of promised I wouldn't say.

GABE
I don't know what you're going on
about, but we need to talk about last
night.

RUTH
Last night? What did she do last
night?

GABE
Not her. You. You were totally out of
control. It's like you were
possessed.

RUTH
Oh, I get it. She was too scared to
tell you, so she's making stuff up
about me. This is so typical. She
wants to throw me under the bus but
she won't say that SHE'S the one who
needs help.

GABE
Help with what?

RUTH
Did you honestly believe a month in
that shitty rehab was going to solve
her problems?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GABE
She's drinking again?

RUTH
I'm surprised you hadn't noticed.

GABE
But she was doing so good. She's gone back to school and everything.

RUTH
Maybe that's what triggered it. Maybe it was too much preparing to work in a high school. If it was me, and I went through what she did, I'd never set foot in a high school again.

GABE
How long have you known?

RUTH
I've suspected for awhile, but I've been sure for a few days.

GABE
Okay. Thank you for telling me. I'll talk to her.

RUTH
Just don't tell her I told you. Tell her you figured it out yourself.

GABE
Sure. No problem.

Ruth walks out.

Gabe grabs his hammer and the stops.

GABE (cont'd)
Ruth wait, we need to -
(then)
Ruth?
(then)
Shit.

Gabe returns to working.

INT. DEN - DAY

Ruth has returned the typewriter to the den. She stands over it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WAH WAH WAH WAH

Gabe comes in.

GABE

Ruth. RUTH!

Ruth whips around. Complete FEAR and PANIC in her eyes.

RUTH

MOM DON'T! LOOK OUT!

Ruth dives at Gabe. She knocks him to the ground. She's breathing hard and in a full blown panic attack.

GABE

What are you -

Ruth reaches up, as if someone is standing over them.

RUTH

Mom, please don't! Don't hurt him.

Gabe looks up, entirely confused because no one is there.

GABE

Ruth there's no one there!

RUTH

No she's - she's -

Ruth looks up. She looks around. She pulls herself away from Gabe.

GABE

Were you seeing Mom?

Ruth can barely breathe. Gabe grabs her and holds her.

GABE (cont'd)

It's okay. It was just a dream. You were sleepwalking again.

RUTH

It wasn't a dream. It was real.

GABE

I know it seems like it but -

RUTH

No! It was real. She's HERE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GABE

Ruth...

RUTH

Don't look at me like that. I'm not crazy.

GABE

I know that. No one thinks that.

RUTH

You don't understand.

GABE

So tell me. Help me understand.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Gabe gives Ruth a mug of tea.

GABE

Can you tell me what happened?

RUTH

I know Mom isn't here. I know that.

Gabe waits for her to say more.

RUTH (cont'd)

I was still there.

GABE

Still where?

RUTH

You won't -

GABE

Don't tell me I won't understand. You can't say that until you've told me what's going on.

RUTH

Do you ever have dreams of yourself living a life you've never lived?

GABE

Sometimes. Not a lot. But I know what you mean.

RUTH

But what if they're not dreams?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GABE

What do you mean? Like a past life?

RUTH

Not a past life. It's happening now.
Just in another dimension.

GABE

Like a parallel universe?

RUTH

If the dream is so real it's like you
were there, then is it a dream? Or
are you the dream? Which one is real?

GABE

What are these dreams like? Are they
nightmares?

RUTH

No - it's not that. It's more than
that. I don't know how to explain it.

GABE

Just try.

Ruth shakes her head.

GABE (cont'd)

You cannot go back in the den. It
triggers something in you.

RUTH

No, I know. I want the lock back on
there.

GABE

And the typewriter?

RUTH

It helps me.

GABE

How? Is it like a conversation with
yourself?

RUTH

Not exactly.

GABE

What is it then?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RUTH

I'm really tired. I'm sorry I scared you. I'm going to be fine. I just hope you can get Crystal the help she needs. She's a good person. She deserves better.

Ruth stands up. She walks out.

GABE

I agree - but - hey - wait. Don't go. We're not done talking.

(then)

Ruth?

(then)

Great.

Ruth is gone. Gabe waits a moment and then gets back to work.

INT. RUTH'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ruth plays with her hamster on the floor.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Gabe screws the lock back into place on the den door.

Crystal comes up in the hall.

CRYSTAL

Does she know you're doing that?

GABE

She knows.

(then)

We should talk.

INT. RUTH'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ruth sleeps on the floor of her bedroom. The hamster runs under the bed.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Gabe and Crystal stand in the backyard.

CRYSTAL

What are we doing out here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GABE
I wanted us to be able talk
privately, without Ruth walking in.

CRYSTAL
So you talked to her?

GABE
Sort of.

CRYSTAL
What do you mean?

GABE
She came to talk to me, but she
doesn't think she needs help.

CRYSTAL
Of course not. She's in denial.

GABE
She thinks you do.

CRYSTAL
Me?

GABE
She said you've been drinking again.

CRYSTAL
She said that?

GABE
Is it true?

CRYSTAL
I can't believe that. You see! She'll
do anything to avoid facing her
issues. She's scared and she -

GABE
Crystal, is it true?

INT. RUTH'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ruth wakes up. The hamster cage is gone. She looks around
her room, but there's no cage.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Ruth walks down the hall. She comes into the den.

INT. DEN - DAY

Ruth looks down at the typewriter. She hears a noise from downstairs and then MUSIC.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The kitchen has transformed to pre-renovation. Everything is back as it should be.

Cynthia is playing music and dancing. She is full of energy, smiling, and dancing with pure joy as she cooks and prepares empanadas.

Ruth watches her, transfixed. Cynthia is beautiful and captivating.

CYNTHIA

There you are! Come, dance with me.

RUTH

I don't want to.

CYNTHIA

Come on!

Cynthia grabs Ruth and they dance for a moment. Ruth cracks a smile. A real smile that spreads from ear to ear.

CYNTHIA (cont'd)

I'm making empanadas.

RUTH

Mmmmm. I love your empanadas.

CYNTHIA

How much?

RUTH

How much do I love them?

CYNTHIA

Yeah. Like on a scale of one to ten. Are they a ten?

RUTH

Yeah, I'd say they're a ten.

CYNTHIA

Just like you. You're the best gift God has ever given me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CYNTHIA (cont'd)

(then)

They're so good because they're your grandmother's secret recipe. She used to make them with her own grandmother in Buenos Aires.

RUTH

I want to go someday. I want to see Argentina.

CYNTHIA

You will. You'll have all the money you'll need. Know how?

RUTH

How?

CYNTHIA

We're going to open a restaurant. And we're going to sell our famous empanadas!

RUTH

Mom...

CYNTHIA

What? You said they're a ten!

RUTH

I know, but, we don't know anything about owning a restaurant. And we don't have money to open one.

CYNTHIA

We'll figure it out! We're two smart women with passion and grit. We can do anything!

Ruth folds the dough of empanadas.

CYNTHIA (cont'd)

You don't agree?

RUTH

It's just, I don't think I'll have time for that.

CYNTHIA

Why not?

RUTH

I applied to go college. I'm going to start my classes in the fall.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RUTH (cont'd)

And don't worry. I'm totally going to commute. I'm not moving out.

Cynthia's entire demeanor changes. A darkness comes over her. She turns off the music.

CYNTHIA

I'm sorry, did you say you applied for college? Why would you keep that from me?

RUTH

I didn't want to tell you because I knew you'd get upset.

CYNTHIA

So you lied to me?

RUTH

No. It's not like that. I just didn't want you to be mad.

CYNTHIA

Why would I be mad? Because the only person I have left is going to abandon me and leave me to rot here alone?

RUTH

I'm not leaving, I'll be commuting. It's only 45 minutes each way.

(then)

This is important to me. I want to get an education. I want to -

CYNTHIA

Don't you think I want that for you also?

RUTH

But you said -

CYNTHIA

I told you not to go to college because I knew it would be too much for you.

RUTH

It's not -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CYNTHIA

You have a serious anxiety disorder. You can barely go outside alone without having a panic attack. I'm trying to help you so you don't have a nervous breakdown. Do you want to end up in one of those mental hospitals?

Ruth looks down.

CYNTHIA (cont'd)

You're not a strong person. You're weak. And that's okay. Weak isn't bad. It just means you're too gentle for this world. I always said this world would eat you alive, and I have done everything I could to protect you and keep you safe.

RUTH

I'm not weak.

CYNTHIA

Oh my love. You are. And you're not very smart either. I'm sorry. I know that hurts to hear, but better to hear it from someone who loves you, right? The truth is, there's not much you can do on your own and not fail. But with me - now THAT is how you succeed! With me by your side, you can do anything!

Ruth sniffles and wipes away tears.

CYNTHIA (cont'd)

You see? You're soft as a jelly fish. But it's fine. I'm about to give you a restaurant.

RUTH

I don't want a restaurant. I want to go to college.

CYNTHIA

You don't want a restaurant? Why the fuck not? Isn't that enough? Why am I never enough? I try to protect you from ruining your life, and you thank me by lying and deceiving me. Why do you want to hurt me?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

CYNTHIA (cont'd)

Are you that selfish? Did I raise you
to care about no one but your own
self?

Ruth looks down, hurt and destroyed by Cynthia's words.
Tears fall from her eyes.

CYNTHIA (cont'd)

No one cares about you like I do. No
one will ever love you like I do.

Ruth rolls up more empanadas.

RUTH

So what should we call our
restaurant?

Cynthia softens. Her anger melts away. She turns the music
back on.

CYNTHIA

I have a few ideas I'm tossing
around, but you'll have final
approval.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Gabe and Crystal are talking. They look over to see Ruth in
the kitchen window, staring out, dead eyed.

CRYSTAL

How long has she been standing there?

GABE

I don't know.

CRYSTAL

She's probably sleepwalking.

GABE

Let's go get her. We can finish this
later.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Gabe and Crystal gently grab Ruth. They lead her away.

RUTH

Mom? Where we going?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRYSTAL
Back to bed, sweetie.

RUTH
I'm sorry about college.

CRYSTAL
It's okay.

RUTH
You're not mad anymore?

CRYSTAL
I was never mad.

INT. RUTH'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ruth is guided to her bed.

The hamster runs out from under the bed. Crystal grabs him and puts him in his cage.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Gabe and Crystal sit at the table. Crystal's bottle of vodka is on the table.

GABE
How long has this been going on?

CRYSTAL
Since we moved in here.

From down the hall, they hear Ruth trying to open the door to the den. What starts out as mild soon turns into POUNDING and KICKING.

Gabe and Crystal run into the hall.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ruth is kicking at the door, trying to get it open.

GABE
Ruth! Ruth, wake up!

Ruth spins around, FURIOUS.

RUTH
I am awake you moron!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GABE
What are you doing?

RUTH
I need the typewriter!

GABE
What for?

RUTH
She needs me!

GABE
Who? Mom?

CRYSTAL
She's gone, Ruth. She died. Remember.

RUTH
It's not for mom. It's for her!

CRYSTAL
Who's her?

RUTH
Can someone open this fucking door or
are you going to stand there like
useless idiots?

CRYSTAL
You agreed it was best if you didn't
go in there.

GABE
You told me you wanted the lock back
on.

RUTH
I never said that. Why would I say
that? I need the typewriter. NOW!

GABE
Why do you want it? Who are you
communicating with?

RUTH
I don't have to answer to you! Are
you going to give me the key or do I
have to break this god damn door
down?

GABE
We're not -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Ruth storms past them, out the hall, and into the garage.

CRYSTAL
Should we call for help?

GABE
Who would we call?

Ruth comes back in with a sledgehammer. She lifts it to swing at the door.

GABE (cont'd)
NO!

Gabe runs up and stops her. They wrestle over the sledgehammer.

RUTH
Let go!

GABE
You cannot go destroying stuff! We're going to sell the house soon.

RUTH
Then give me the key!

GABE
I told you -

Ruth shoves Gabe against the wall, pinning him there with the sledge hammer. She pushes it against his chest.

GABE (cont'd)
Ruth stop!

CRYSTAL
Ruth! Ruth let him go!

GABE
Ruth! I can't breathe!

RUTH
This is all your fault!

GABE
What?

RUTH
You should've never come here. She's dead because of you!

Ruth drops the sledge hammer. She walks away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Crystal runs to Gabe. He gasps and tries to catch his breath.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Gabe has his shirt off. Crystal looks at the bruise going across his chest.

CRYSTAL
Does it hurt?

GABE
I'm fine.

CRYSTAL
Can you take a deep breath in?

GABE
It hurts. I think she bruised some of my ribs. I had no idea she was that strong.

The bottle of vodka still sits on the table. They sit in silence.

Crystal grabs the bottle. She throws it in the trash.

CRYSTAL
I knew moving in here was a mistake.

GABE
You never said anything.

CRYSTAL
You didn't let me.

GABE
What? How?

CRYSTAL
You just get so determined about stuff and you can only see that one thing. I knew if I said anything you wouldn't listen.

GABE
That's not true. I always listen to you.

CRYSTAL
And what if I had said no? What if I said we weren't moving in here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GABE

I mean, that wasn't really an option. Ruth needed us, and our place was too small for all three of us. Moving in here was the best thing for everyone. Ruth has us, I can fix the house up, and when it's sold we'll have plenty of money to start over.

CRYSTAL

You see! You only see ONE thing.

GABE

I'm just trying to keep what's left of this family together. Is that so wrong?

CRYSTAL

And you think I'm not? You think I'm not doing everything I can to help Ruth, and to be here for you? Do you have any idea how stressful it is watching you work yourself to do death?

GABE

How many times do I have to say, I'm just doing this as fast as I can to get us out of here?

CRYSTAL

And then what? What happens when it's done? Do you really think you'll feel better?

Gabe looks up and goes quiet. Crystal looks over.

Ruth stands in the doorway, staring at them.

She silently comes over to the table and sits down. She's still angry Ruth.

RUTH

I won't go in the den. You can keep it locked. But I want the typewriter.

GABE

Tell us who you're talking to and we'll let you have it.

RUTH

No. You won't understand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CRYSTAL
Are you writing to Cynthia?

RUTH
No. She's dead. And it's because of
Gabe. He killed her.

GABE
Excuse me? Are you serious?

RUTH
I told you to go home. If you'd just
listened to me she'd still be here!

GABE
I was trying to save you.

RUTH
Save me from what?

GABE
From her!

RUTH
I can save myself. Don't you
understand? Can't you see what's
happening? Or are you going to ruin
this too?

GABE
She was controlling your life. She
wasn't a good person. Can't you see
that?

RUTH
She loved me.

CRYSTAL
We love you. And we want to help you.
You can have the typewriter.

GABE
No - that's not -

CRYSTAL
Come on. I have a key.

Crystal leads Ruth out.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Crystal unlocks the door.

INT. DEN - NIGHT

Ruth comes in. She's about to grab the typewriter. Crystal stops her.

CRYSTAL
What happened that night?

RUTH
Didn't Gabe tell you?

CRYSTAL
Some of it. But I want to know exactly what happened.

RUTH
There are just so many secrets in this house. Who can keep up with them all?

CRYSTAL
Why did you say Gabe killed her?

RUTH
Because he did. Maybe he's the one that should start drinking. But then again, why should he when he can drown his guilt in endless home renovation projects?

Crystal is silent.

RUTH (cont'd)
Has it not occurred to you that Gabe finished what he said he would do here weeks ago? And then all of a sudden he's tearing out the kitchen. What's next? Is he going to tear the whole house down?

CRYSTAL
He just wants to make sure it sells for a lot of money. He's doing this for all of us.

RUTH
Or maybe he just wants a reason to stay here. Maybe he can't move on. Maybe he thinks his punishment is to live in this house forever and relive that night over and over and over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRYSTAL
I don't think he wants that. He won't
even talk about it.

RUTH
If you say so.

Ruth grabs the typewriter and leaves.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Crystal comes back in. Gabe sits quietly at the table.
Crystal sits with him.

GABE
I can't believe you just did that.

CRYSTAL
It's the only way we can find out
what's going on. Do you want to know
who or what she's communicating with?
Then let her do it. Let her talk to
it, and we'll read it for ourselves.
She's never going to tell us.

GABE
I don't like this. I think it's a bad
idea.

CRYSTAL
Do you have a better idea?

GABE
Have you been drinking? Is that what
this is?

CRYSTAL
I can't believe you just said that.

GABE
Well I'm sorry but I don't really
know you right now.

CRYSTAL
I could say the same about you.

Crystal gets up and leaves.

INT. RUTH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ruth stares down into the typewriter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WAH WAH WAH WAH

She snaps out of it and looks around. Someone is KNOCKING on her door.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK KNOCKKNOCKKNOCK

CYNTHIA (O.S.)

Ruth? I'm so sorry. I just want to talk.

Ruth looks down at the typewriter. Something is written there. She reads the text.

RUTH (READING)

I'm starting to think you're right. I want to go to college but mom won't let me. She makes me feel so guilty. And I'm afraid she's going to do something to herself if I leave. What should I do?

More KNOCKING. It's getting more aggressive.

CYNTHIA (O.S.)

Can you answer me? I really need to talk. Please. You know I can't stand it when you're mad at me. Ruth, please, I'm begging you. Just talk to me. You're killing me right now. I feel like I'm dying. I am literally dying. This stress is ripping me apart. Why are you doing this to me? Do you hate me? Do you want me to die? Is this what you want? Fine. You want me dead? Then I'll give you what I want. That's how much I love you.

Ruth types as Cynthia frantically knocks and tries to get Ruth's attention.

RUTH (TYPING)

I know how hard this is. I know it feels like you won't survive it. But you have to leave. If you don't, it will get so much worse. You cannot win with her. She's manipulating you. She doesn't want what's best for you. You deserve to leave on your own terms. If you don't -

The knocking stops. Everything goes quiet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RUTH

Mom?

Ruth slowly opens the door.

RUTH (cont'd)

Mom? You okay?

(then)

Mom answer me!

(then)

MOM!

BLACK SCREEN

INT. RUTH'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ruth is staring down into her typewriter.

WAH WAH WAH

She snaps out of it and looks around. Someone is KNOCKING on her door.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK KNOCKKNOCKKNOCK

GABE (O.S.)

Ruth! Ruth, answer me!

Ruth looks down at the typewriter. Something is written there. She pulls the page out and reads it.

RUTH (READING)

She's manipulating you. She doesn't want what's best for you. You deserve to leave on your own terms. If you don't -

Ruth types more.

RUTH (TYPING)

Sorry, I don't know what happened. I think I blacked out. I have more to say. Are you there?

GABE (O.S.)

Ruth, seriously, I know you're in there. I can hear you typing. You're scaring me. If you don't answer me in three seconds I'm calling 9-1-1.

Ruth, disoriented, slowly gets up and opens her door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GABE
Finally. I've been knocking for five minutes.

RUTH
What time is it?

GABE
It's 9 o'clock.

RUTH
In the morning?

GABE
Yeah. I made breakfast. Come on.

RUTH
I'm not hungry.

Ruth tries to close her door. Gabe stops her.

GABE
You need to eat.

RUTH
Later. I just woke up.

GABE
I made coffee also.

Ruth relents and goes with Gabe.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Bacon sizzles on a griddle. Gabe flips pancakes, totally in his zone. He loves this.

He prepares two plates of food. He finishes them and gives one to Ruth.

GABE
Remember how Dad used to make this for us every Saturday?

Ruth shrugs.

GABE (cont'd)
You don't like it?

RUTH
No. It's not that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ruth pokes at her food.

RUTH (cont'd)
I don't remember Dad.

GABE
I sometimes forget what he looked like. Then I look at a picture and it's like, oh yeah.

RUTH
I mean I don't remember him at all.

GABE
Really? That's weird. How old were you when he left?

RUTH
I don't know. How old were you?

GABE
I was 13, so you must've been, what, 8?

RUTH
That sounds about right.

GABE
When you say you don't remember him, you mean you don't remember anything specific?

RUTH
Like I don't remember him at all. I have no memories of him. When I look at pictures of him it's like looking at a stranger. If I saw him on the street I wouldn't know him.

GABE
Wow. That is so weird.

RUTH
Do you remember him?

GABE
Yeah. But you spent way more time with him than I did.

RUTH
I did? What did we do?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GABE

I don't know. Just hanging out. He took you on a few trips.

RUTH

What kind of trips?

GABE

Fishing trips.

RUTH

I went fishing?

GABE

You really don't remember that?

Ruth shakes her head.

RUTH

Did you like him? Dad - did you like him?

GABE

I guess. He didn't have much to do with me. And he drank a lot. He was only interested in you.

RUTH

Why'd he leave?

GABE

One night mom was screaming at him. I couldn't hear what it was about. But I heard your name a lot. Whatever she said, he left and never came back.

RUTH

What do you think she said?

GABE

I have no idea. But I think getting rid of him was the one thing she did right. There was something not right about him.

RUTH

What do you mean? Like he was a creep?

GABE

Yeah. Maybe. I don't know.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GABE (cont'd)

(then)

You really don't remember the fishing trips?

RUTH

No. Not at all.

GABE

But you remember Mom?

RUTH

Of course. She was my best friend.

(then)

She was my only friend.

GABE

That's not true. You have me. And Crystal. And your hamster.

RUTH

Yeah. I guess.

Gabe and Ruth eat in silence.

INT. RUTH'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ruth sits down to the typewriter. She goes back to the last thing written to her.

RUTH (READING)

I'm starting to think you're right. I want to go to college but mom won't let me. She makes me feel so guilty. And I'm afraid she's going to do something to herself if I leave. What should I do?

Ruth puts her fingers on the keys. She types.

RUTH (TYPING)

I know you don't think you can, but you can live your life. You're strong. And you're smart. She tries to make you feel weak and powerless, but you're not! You're -

Ruth's eyes glaze over. She goes stiff and she stares down into the typewriter

WAH WAH WAH WAH

BLACK SCREEN

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Ruth and Cynthia are in the backyard, gardening. Ruth looks around, confused.

CYNTHIA
What's wrong?

RUTH
How did I get here?

CYNTHIA
What do you mean?

Ruth looks down at her hands. They're covered in dirt. The typewriter sits beside them.

CYNTHIA (cont'd)
Are you alright?

RUTH
Why is the typewriter out here?

CYNTHIA
You brought it out here. You said it
was a nice day to write outside.
(then)
Let's take a little break. I'll get
some lemonade.

Cynthia goes inside. She comes back out with two glasses of lemonade and hands one to Ruth.

RUTH
Thank you.

Ruth looks over at her beautiful mother, being so perfect in this moment.

RUTH (cont'd)
Can I ask you something?

CYNTHIA
Of course. Anything.

RUTH
Why did dad leave?

CYNTHIA
Because he was a sick fuck.

RUTH
What do you mean? What did he do?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CYNTHIA

He was obsessed with you. It was sick.

RUTH

Did he do something to me?

CYNTHIA

I don't want you to relive it. It's a blessing you don't remember. I always said, God must love us, because he gave you the gift of freedom from those horrible memories. He took away what that sick man did, and he left me with you, my perfect baby.

RUTH

But what exactly happened? Gabe said you were screaming at Dad and then he left.

CYNTHIA

Damn straight. I saw what he did, and I told him, if he didn't leave I would kill him. I'd cut his throat from ear to ear. He knew I was serious. He packed up and left right then.

RUTH

Where is he now?

CYNTHIA

Who cares? He's gone.

(then)

I would do anything to protect you. When I said I'd kill him, I meant it. I would kill for you. I love you so much.

RUTH

I love you too.

CYNTHIA

And yet, you want to leave me.

Ruth picks up a box of flowers.

RUTH

So what are we planting?

Crystal's voice cuts in from an unseen place.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CRYSTAL (V.O.)
Ruth. Ruth, are you okay?

Ruth looks around.

CYNTHIA
What are you looking for?

RUTH
Do you hear that?

CRYSTAL (V.O.)
Can you hear me?

RUTH
I can hear you!

CYNTHIA
Who are you talking to?

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Ruth lays in the grass by the back of the yard, completely asleep. The typewriter sits next to her. Crystal tries to wake her up.

CRYSTAL
Ruthie, come on, wake up!

Ruth snaps awake and sits up, startled. She looks around.

RUTH
What happened? How did I get out here?

CRYSTAL
I don't know. I came home and I saw you laying out here. I thought you were dead.

RUTH
Sorry. I get into a pretty deep sleep sometimes.

Crystal glances at the typewriter. The writing on the pages goes almost to the bottom.

Ruth rips out the page and holds it close to her chest.

CRYSTAL
Were you talking to her? Is that why you came out here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RUTH
How do you know it's a she.

CRYSTAL
Just from stuff you've said.
(then)
What does she want from you?

RUTH
Nothing. She doesn't want anything.

CRYSTAL
What do you talk about?

RUTH
I'm helping her.

CRYSTAL
Helping her to what?

RUTH
To not make the same mistakes I did.

CRYSTAL
Can I meet her?

RUTH
No. That's not how it works.

CRYSTAL
Are you -

RUTH
This isn't a Q and A.

Ruth picks up the typewriter and leaves.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Gabe puts the final touches on the kitchen restoration.
Crystal comes in.

CRYSTAL
Holy shit. When you said you could do
this, I didn't know what to think.
But this is stunning.

GABE
Do you like the floor tiles?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRYSTAL

Yeah. They look so good. I can't believe you did all of this yourself.

GABE

I'm pretty happy with how it came out.

CRYSTAL

It's going to be so nice to have a kitchen again.

GABE

Unfortunately, you are about to lose a bathroom.

CRYSTAL

What? Why? You're not doing the bathroom are you?

GABE

I have to. It's so outdated. Now that the kitchen is done, it makes how ugly the bathroom is even more noticeable.

CRYSTAL

When you started the kitchen, you said this was it.

GABE

And I meant it. But if we're going to do this, we have to do it right.

CRYSTAL

Why don't you want to leave?

GABE

I do!

CRYSTAL

Apparently not that bad.

GABE

Trust me, no one wants out of here more than I do.

CRYSTAL

Then sell the house as is. We'll still make more than enough.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GABE

And then what? Are we going to live in a shoebox? We need as much as possible so we can actually afford to move INTO somewhere.

CRYSTAL

Or maybe this IS the somewhere. What is it with this house?

GABE

What?

CRYSTAL

Why are you and Ruth so obsessed with it? I don't understand why you'd want to spend one more second here than you had to.

GABE

You're right. You don't understand.

CRYSTAL

Then you're -

From down the hall *CLACK CLACK CLACKCLACKCLACK CLACK*

GABE

Jesus. Not that again.

CRYSTAL

I have a theory. It's going to sound really weird.

GABE

What is it?

CRYSTAL

I think she's talking to her self. Those messages, they're to her and from her. But not her her.

GABE

What do you mean?

CRYSTAL

I mean it's like she's writing to her self, but to another version of her.

GABE

I don't follow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CRYSTAL

When she was passed out in the backyard, I saw some of what she wrote. She keeps telling someone, and I think it's her, to leave. To get away from her mom, to go live her life.

GABE

And you think she's responding?

CRYSTAL

Yeah. I think she believes she's writing to another Ruth, like a Ruth in another dimension who still lives with Cynthia. And she's trying to help her to leave. It's like she wants a second chance to do it all over again.

GABE

She wouldn't do that. That's like, like someone who's left reality. Ruth is acting weird, I'll admit that, but she's not wacko.

CRYSTAL

It's just a theory. Don't say anything to her.

Crystal looks at her watch.

CRYSTAL (cont'd)

I gotta go. My AA meeting is starting.

Gabe gives Crystal a hug.

GABE

I'm proud of you.

CRYSTAL

Thank you.

GABE

I'll see you tonight.

Gabe and Crystal kiss. She leaves.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Gabe stands outside Ruth's door. He listens to her typing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLACK CLACK CLACKCLACKCLACK CLACK

The typing stops. Gabe knocks on her door.

GABE
Can I come in?

No response. Gabe opens the door.

INT. RUTH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ruth sits on the floor with the typewriter. Gabe comes in and sits across from her.

GABE
Can I read what you're writing?

RUTH
No. It's private.

GABE
I won't judge you.

RUTH
I don't care.

GABE
I just want to know it's not
something I should be worried about.

RUTH
Meaning what?

Gabe reaches over and grabs the paper. He rips it out. He reads a few lines.

Ruth reaches over and rips it out of his hands.

GABE
Who is she?

Ruth glares at him.

GABE (cont'd)
Is it you? Are you writing to
yourself?
(then)
Is this a cry for help?

RUTH
If anyone needs help it's you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GABE

Me? I'm the only one holding it together in this house.

RUTH

Then why haven't you told Crystal what really happened? Why did you let her think mom fell? Why can't you admit what you did?

GABE

I didn't do anything!

RUTH

Bullshit!

GABE

I was protecting you!

RUTH

I don't need protecting!

GABE

So you were just going to spend the rest of your life as her pawn?

RUTH

I was going to leave when I was ready. I needed to do it in my own time.

GABE

Is that what all this typewriter shit is? Are you trying to rewrite what happened?

RUTH

I'm not re-writing it. This isn't a story. It's real.

GABE

Real how? Because as I see it, you're right here and mom is still dead. That story is over. So whoever you are writing about, she's not real. There's not some alternate dimension version of you. How would that even work? Like you've opened a portal and you're going to save Alternate Ruth?

RUTH

I knew you wouldn't understand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GABE

Understand what? I can't help if you won't tell me what's going on.

RUTH

If you had a chance to change something in your life, would you take it?

Gabe is about to respond but she cuts him off.

RUTH (cont'd)

That's what this is. I don't know why I've been given one, but somehow I have opened a doorway, and no I can't explain how, I only know it's happening and I can help me, but not me here, another me, and I need to do it right. I won't get another chance.

Gabe quietly takes this in.

RUTH (cont'd)

I knew it. You think I'm crazy.

GABE

I don't think you're crazy.

RUTH

So you believe me?

GABE

I don't know. Tell me how it works.

RUTH

I told you, I don't really know. The first message was just there one day. She reached out to me.

GABE

But the typewriter is the doorway, right?

RUTH

Sort of.

GABE

And how is it you help her?

RUTH

I send her messages. I tell her what I wish I'd known. And sometimes I go there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GABE

Go where?

RUTH

Wherever she is. I go there, and I'm in her life. And when I'm there, I get a chance to do things again, but different. Like how I wish I'd done them.

GABE

Like what?

RUTH

Like telling mom I got into college and I'm going.

GABE

You got into college?

RUTH

Yeah. I was supposed to start in the fall.

GABE

Why didn't you go?

RUTH

Because I was too scared to tell her. I knew she'd think I was abandoning her.

GABE

But you can still go?

RUTH

I guess. I was allowed to defer for a year. But I don't want to now.

GABE

Why not?

RUTH

Because I don't care anymore.

GABE

But you -

RUTH

I really need to take a shower. We'll talk more later.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ruth finishes her shower.

INT. RUTH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Freshly showered, Ruth sits before the typewriter. She pulls out the page.

RUTH (READING)

Gabe called. He said I can move in with him until I find my own place. I haven't told mom yet. I'm afraid of what she'll do.

Ruth puts in a fresh page.

RUTH (TYPING)

I'm so proud of you. I know it's hard. But if you don't do this, you and Gabe will both suffer in ways you can't imagine. Gabe is a good person. Go be with him. He will help you to heal.

Ruth's eyes glaze over.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Crystal and Gabe sit at the table, talking.

GABE

I really think we should take the typewriter away.

CRYSTAL

I disagree. I think it's helping.

GABE

You're not a doctor. You don't know that.

CRYSTAL

And neither do you.

GABE

We shouldn't be encouraging this delusion.

Crystal is quite.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GABE (cont'd)
What? You think it's real?

CRYSTAL
I didn't say that.

GABE
You're thinking something.

CRYSTAL
We don't know exactly what's
happening. We only know she's working
something out.

GABE
You cannot be serious. She could go
into this delusion and not come back.

CRYSTAL
But what if it's not a delusion?

GABE
Okay. Let's say it's real. You're
honestly going to tell me you believe
Ruth is contacting some alternate
dimension, where she's talking to
another version of herself, and that
the typewriter is a portal to that
Universe, and she can go there and
change the outcome of something she
didn't like.

CRYSTAL
Things we can't explain happen every
day. Just because you don't
understand it doesn't mean it's not
real.

GABE
Crystal, come on. I need you to be
realistic. I cannot do this alone.

CRYSTAL
But what if it's real? I don't want
to take that away from her. I know
what it's like to wish you could
change an outcome. I know more than
anyone.

GABE
Is this about high school?

Crystal nods.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GABE (cont'd)

I'm really sorry about what happened to you, I really am, but this is different.

CRYSTAL

You wouldn't understand.

GABE

You think I don't know what it's like to be fucked up by the past?

CRYSTAL

What happened to me didn't just fuck me up. It changed me. It destroyed the person I was becoming and turned me into something else. It is there every day, haunting me, reminding me of what he took from me.

GABE

I'm sorry. I really am. If I could go back in time and change it so that never happened, I would. But that's the whole point. We can't change it. We can only go forward.

CRYSTAL

"We"? There's no "we" in this scenario. WE didn't have our virginity stolen by our high school math teacher. We weren't repeatedly raped by him. We don't have nightmares about him. We are not an alcoholic. That's all me. I am the one who has to live with all of that. So stop telling me what WE should do when you don't know.

GABE

You're right. I shouldn't have said that. But it doesn't change the fact that the typewriter isn't some magical portal. It's just a typewriter.

CRYSTAL

You don't get it. It doesn't have to be real to help her. She just has to believe it's real.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GABE

That makes no sense. It's either real
or it's not.

CRYSTAL

Just forget it.

Crystal leaves.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Crystal and Gabe are in bed. Crystal is tossing and turning,
agitated.

She gets up and tip toes to the door.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Crystal quietly opens Ruth's bedroom door. She leans in.

INT. RUTH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Crystal tip toes in. She picks up the typewriter.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Crystal sits at the table with the typewriter. She puts
paper into it. She types.

CRYSTAL (TYPING)

Crystal?

(then)

Hello?

(then)

You cannot trust Mr. Hernandez. He's
a predator. He will take advantage of
you and hurt you. DO NOT TRUST HIM.

Crystal sits and waits. Nothing happens. She looks up.

Ruth is in the doorway, staring at Crystal. Ruth's hands are
balled into fists. Rage and fury course through her face and
body.

Crystal jumps up and backs away from the table.

CRYSTAL

I'm so sorry. Please don't be mad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ruth comes over. She reaches for the typewriter and then stops.

RUTH

What is this?

CRYSTAL

I wanted to warn her. To warn me.
Just in case it works.

RUTH

You can't contact the past. It's not
a time machine.

CRYSTAL

But you're contacting yourself,
before everything that happened.

RUTH

No. I'm contacting myself in a place
where it hasn't happened YET. It's
not the past. It's not me six months
ago. It's me in a slightly different
timeline.

CRYSTAL

So then I can't help myself?

RUTH

I never said that.

CRYSTAL

But I have to warn her. To warn me. I
have to change it so it never
happens.

RUTH

You can help yourself.

CRYSTAL

How?

RUTH

Keep going to AA. Keep going to
school. Keep doing everything you're
doing to get your life back.

CRYSTAL

But that's not enough. It's still in
here. I want it erased from my mind
and my body. I want a second chance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RUTH

You already have one. Don't you get what I'm saying? You're in school. You're living with someone you love. You're living your life. That's exactly what I'm trying to give to her, to the me that hasn't given up on life yet. The typewriter won't work for you because you don't need it. If I could trade places with you, and live your life, I would. A million times over.

Ruth grabs the typewriter and leaves.

Crystal turns on the stove. She heats up the kettle for a cup of tea.

Gabe comes in.

GABE

Hey. I thought I heard voices.

CRYSTAL

Ruth was down here.

GABE

What'd she say?

CRYSTAL

She wishes she could trade places with me. She thinks my life is great.

GABE

What do you think?

Crystal walks over to Gabe. She hugs him.

CRYSTAL

I think I love you and I'm grateful I have you.

GABE

I love you too.

CRYSTAL

Thank you for everything.

GABE

I'm so glad you're here.

CRYSTAL

Me too.

INT. NIGHT - HALLWAY

Ruth stands in the hallway holding a small luggage bag. She looks around, disoriented.

She puts the bag down and looks inside. It's full of clothing and items for leaving.

She hears Cynthia coming. Cynthia comes into the hallway.

CYNTHIA

What is that?

RUTH

Nothing. It's nothing.

Cynthia searches in the bag. She becomes filled with rage.

CYNTHIA

I knew it! You're leaving!

RUTH

I'm just going to stay with Gabe for a few days.

CYNTHIA

And what about me? Am I not allowed to see my own son? Or am I not allowed to come so he can turn you against me? He wants to steal you away. He's so selfish.

RUTH

It's not like that. I just need some space. I'll only be gone a few days.

CYNTHIA

Space? From what? Me?

Ruth tries to get past Cynthia. She blocks her.

CYNTHIA (cont'd)

He's manipulating you. You see that right? He's just using you.

RUTH

For what?

CYNTHIA

To get back at me. That's all he cares about. He's obsessed with punishing me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RUTH
Mom, you have to let me go.

CYNTHIA
Just listen to me! He's not a good person. There's things you don't know about him. Things I've never told you.

Ruth tries to get past. Cynthia grabs her forcefully and pushes her back.

CYNTHIA (cont'd)
I won't let you get hurt by another man in this family. I love you too much.

RUTH
Let go of me!

CYNTHIA
Just listen to me.

RUTH
I said let go!

Cynthia and Ruth wrestle, and Ruth gets past her. But then Cynthia kicks her and knocks her to the ground.

Cynthia runs past Ruth and to the kitchen.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ruth comes out to see Cynthia holding a big knife.

RUTH
What are you doing?

CYNTHIA
You're making me do this!

RUTH
Are you going to kill me?

CYNTHIA
I'm protecting you from that monster!

RUTH
Mom -

Cynthia runs at Ruth with the knife.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ruth screams and runs off.

INT. DEN - NIGHT

Ruth sprints into the den. A moment later, Cynthia throws open the door and runs in.

They wrestle and fight for control.

CYNTHIA

RUTH!

(then)

RUTH STOP!

RUTH

You stop!

GABE (V.O.)

RUTH!

RUTH

What's happening?

CYNTHIA

LET GO!

RUTH

I can't!

GABE (V.O.)

Let go!

CRYSTAL (V.O.)

I'm calling the police!

RUTH

No, wait!

BLACK SCREEN

INT. DEN - NIGHT

Ruth snaps back into reality. Instead of wrestling with Cynthia, she's fighting with Gabe.

She lets go, horrified. Gabe is covered with scratches.

RUTH

What's happening?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRYSTAL

We heard you in hear yelling and we came in and you attacked Gabe.

GABE

How did you get in here?

RUTH

I don't know.

GABE

The door was locked. Do you have the key?

RUTH

No.

GABE

Was it unlocked?

RUTH

I don't know. Maybe. I don't remember.

CRYSTAL

What were you doing?

RUTH

I was trying to leave.

GABE

To go where?

RUTH

To go stay with you.

GABE

I'm not going anywhere.

RUTH

I know. Not here. You lived somewhere else. I was trying to leave mom. But she attacked me. I thought she was going to kill me.

Ruth looks over to see the typewriter in the room.

RUTH (cont'd)

Did you put that in here?

GABE

It was here when we came in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CRYSTAL

Ruth, we love you so much. But that wasn't okay. We need -

Ruth RUNS out of the room.

GABE

Shit.

Gabe is about to leave but Crystal stops him.

CRYSTAL

Where are you going?

GABE

To talk to her.

CRYSTAL

Not until we talk and we figure out what we're going to do. This is getting worse. That was really scary.

GABE

I told you not to give her the typewriter.

CRYSTAL

So this is my fault?

GABE

That just encouraged her.

CRYSTAL

Fine. Then take it away. See what happens. Be my guest.

GABE

Fine.

Ruth comes back in. She walks over to the typewriter and puts her hands on it. Gabe stops her.

RUTH

What are you doing?

GABE

I can't let you take that.

RUTH

What? Why? You said I could have it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GABE

And you said you'd stay out of the den.

RUTH

This isn't my fault. I don't know how I got in here.

GABE

You still can't have it. It's making you worse.

RUTH

I need to go back!

GABE

There's no going back! It's not real! You need to be in reality.

RUTH

No, it IS real! I was there! And she's so close! I have to help her.

GABE

And then what? Are you just going to go live in that reality? Is that what's happening? You don't like it here, so you're inventing a reality you do like, and you're just going to give up on us?

RUTH

At least in that reality you're not a killer.

Gabe's face ices over. He grabs the typewriter. Ruth lunges for it, but he holds it away. Ruth jumps on him, but he's not having it.

RUTH (cont'd)

No! I have to go back! She needs me!

Gabe pushes Ruth away. She falls into Crystal.

RUTH (cont'd)

Gabe!

INT. PRIMARY BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gabe puts the typewriter inside of the closet.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Gabe comes out and locks the bedroom door.

RUTH
Gabe, don't do this. I'm begging you.
Let me talk to her. I'm all she has!

Gabe walks away.

Ruth grows increasingly hysterical. She cries as she tries to open the door.

Crystal comes over and consoles her.

CRYSTAL
It's okay. It's going to be okay.

RUTH
She was so close. Why would he do
this to me?

Crystal guides Ruth into her bedroom.

INT. RUTH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Crystal guides Ruth in. Ruth sits on the side of the bed, almost catatonic.

CRYSTAL
Can I get you anything? Water? Tea?
Are you hungry?
(then)
Do you want to hold your hamster?
Here.

Crystal takes the hamster out of the cage. She holds him out. Ruth doesn't take him. Crystal puts him in her lap.

CRYSTAL (cont'd)
I'll talk to Gabe. I'll get you the
typewriter back.

RUTH
She said there were things about him
I didn't know. Bad things.

CRYSTAL
Who said that?

RUTH
Mom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRYSTAL
You mean other universe mom?

Ruth nods. She holds the hamster, a little life coming back to her.

RUTH
What did she mean by that?

CRYSTAL
I don't know. If she's like the Cynthia I knew, then she was probably lying. She'd say anything to get what she wanted.

(then)
Can you tell me what happened that night? How exactly did Gabe kill her?

GABE
It was an accident.

Gabe appears in the doorway, scaring them.

GABE (cont'd)
Can I talk to you?

Crystal and Gabe leave as Ruth, still semi-catatonic, plays with the hamster.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Crystal and Gabe sit at the table together.

GABE
It started when Ruth called me, hysterical.

CRYSTAL
I remember that. She said Cynthia was threatening to kill herself.

GABE
Right. And I decided to get Ruth out of there, once and for all.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

FLASHBACK

Gabe comes in through the backdoor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GABE

Ruth?

(then)

Mom?

From down the hall, Gabe hears a BANG and then a SCREAM.

GABE (cont'd)

Ruth!

Gabe RUNS down the hall.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Gabe finds Cynthia blocking the doorway to the den. The door is open, and Ruth is trapped inside the room.

GABE

Ruth!

CYNTHIA

(to Ruth)

Tell him to leave.

RUTH

Hey Gabe. We're fine. Everything's fine. I was a little upset earlier, but it's nothing. You can go home, okay?

Cynthia turns around. She's holding a knife out.

CYNTHIA

Do not take another step!

GABE

Mom, put down the knife. Nobody has to get hurt.

CYNTHIA

Not until you leave.

GABE

Mom, please. Put down the knife.

CYNTHIA

No! I won't let you hurt her.

GABE

I'm not going to hurt anybody.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CYNTHIA

Bullshit! I know what you did. You're just like your father!

GABE

I swear, I haven't done anything. I just want to talk.

RUTH

Gabe, it's okay. You can go.

GABE

I'm not leaving without you.

RUTH

You should just go. I can handle this.

CYNTHIA

You see? Nobody wants you here.

RUTH

I promise, I'm fine!

GABE

You're not fine! She's got you trapped in there and she's holding a knife!

CYNTHIA

This isn't for her! It's for you!

RUTH

Gabe, listen to me. You have to leave. I'll be okay.

GABE

I can't leave without you. This has gone on long enough.

CYNTHIA

Do you have brain damage? She doesn't want to go with you. She wants you to leave. Now get out!

GABE

She does too want to go, she's just afraid of you!

CYNTHIA

Afraid of me? What have I done?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GABE

She calls me every week, crying because you make her so god damn miserable. Just let her go.

CYNTHIA

Over my dead body.

Cynthia starts to close the door. Gabe leaps at it and SHOVES it back.

INT. DEN - NIGHT

Gabe reaches for Cynthia. She cuts his arm, deep. Ruth screams and tries to get between them.

Ruth gets cut in the scuffle.

GABE

Ruth!

Cynthia is hysterical, trying to cut anyone and anything. Gabe wrestles with her and gets the knife out of her hand. He throws it down the hall.

CYNTHIA

You are nothing! You hear me!
Nothing. The day you left was the
happiest day of my life. I wish you'd
never been born!

Gabe's hands ball into fists. An anger he's never shown before sweeps over him.

RUTH

Gabe, please. I'm begging you. Just
leave.

GABE

I'm not leaving without you.

CYNTHIA

You are poison!

Cynthia grabs a sharpened pencil and charges at Gabe.

RUTH

Gabe!

In a moment of instinctual reaction, Gabe grabs Cynthia and throws her backwards.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

At the same time, Ruth tries to grab the pencil, and she accidentally causes Cynthia to fly down harder and faster into the desk. The back of her head CRACKS hard on the typewriter.

Cynthia crumples to the ground, her eyes dark. Blood pours out of the back of her head.

RUTH (cont'd)

Mom? Mom!

Ruth kneels down by Cynthia.

GABE

She's okay, right? Mom, get up, this isn't funny.

Ruth tries to wake up Cynthia.

RUTH

You killed her!

GABE

It was an accident!

RUTH

You pushed her into the desk. You killed her.

GABE

No! No. I pushed her, and you grabbed her and threw her into the desk.

RUTH

I would never hurt her. She was just trying to protect me.

GABE

From what? Me? You think I'm the one who would hurt you? I would never do that. I was here to help you.

RUTH

You killed her.

Ruth kneels over Cynthia and sobs.

Gabe takes out his phone.

GABE

You have to tell them it was an accident.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GABE (cont'd)

Tell them she fell on her own. You can't say anything about you or me. Okay? Ruth, do you hear me?

Gabe dials 9-1-1.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

PRESENT DAY

Gabe finishes his story.

CRYSTAL

Why didn't you tell me that?

GABE

I don't know. I was scared. I was afraid if anyone knew it wasn't exactly an accident I'd go to jail.

CRYSTAL

But it was self-defense.

GABE

She couldn't have hurt me. I'm ten times stronger. I didn't have to do that if I didn't want to.

CRYSTAL

So you and Ruth...?

GABE

I don't think Ruth meant to hurt her. But I did. I hated her so much. I don't know, something snapped in me. All those years of listening to her abuse, I couldn't take it anymore.

CRYSTAL

But you didn't meant to kill her. Right?

Gabe is quiet.

CRYSTAL (cont'd)

Gabe?

GABE

I don't know what I wanted. I only know I wanted to hurt her in a way so she'd feel how much she'd hurt me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GABE (cont'd)

(then)

I don't know what's wrong with me.
You must think I'm really fucked up.

CRYSTAL

I think you were pushed to your limit
and you reacted.

GABE

But I shouldn't have done that. I
hate that I did that. Every time I
close my eyes, I see her head
slamming into the typewriter. I can
hear that sick thud it makes, and I
see the blood and -

(then)

I should confess. I should tell the
police what really happened.

CRYSTAL

What? Why? That won't help anybody.

GABE

It'll help Ruth. She wants the truth
to be out there. I think that's why
she's like this. I asked her to lie
for me. I started this idea that the
truth doesn't matter, and now she's
drowning in it.

CRYSTAL

You didn't make Ruth like that.

GABE

I did! I did this. It's all my fault.
I should've just left like she said.
She begged me to leave.

CRYSTAL

And then what? Do you honestly
believe that would have had a better
outcome? What if Cynthia killed Ruth
later that night? What if Ruth killed
herself, because she couldn't escape
from Cynthia? Just because you can't
see it doesn't mean a different
outcome would've been better.

GABE

You were right.

CRYSTAL

About what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GABE

That I don't want to leave this house. I don't want to just go on like that didn't happen. I don't know how to go forward.

CRYSTAL

But you can't stay here. You and Ruth both need to get out of here. There are way too many bad memories.

GABE

But what if I can't? What if WE can't?

CRYSTAL

You can. You know how I know? Because I've done it. After what happened, I felt like there was just a black abyss on the other side of it. Like if I went forward and moved on, I'd just fall off a cliff. But I didn't. I met you and I went back to school, and it's not perfect. You know that. You know I have to work at my sobriety and my healing. But it's so worth it.

Crystal thinks quietly for a moment.

CRYSTAL (cont'd)

Is there something else?

GABE

What do you mean?

CRYSTAL

Did something else happen to make you feel like you don't deserve your life back?

GABE

Something besides the accident?

CRYSTAL

It's just something Ruth said. After she was in that other place.

GABE

There is no other place!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CRYSTAL

She said Cynthia said you had done stuff. Bad stuff.

GABE

I'm sure Mom did say that before she died. That's what she does. She plants a seed. Just a tiny seed. And it takes root in your brain, and without her having to do anything else, you start to doubt if you really know someone. She was a master of manipulation. And I cannot believe she's STILL screwing with me even after she's dead.

From down the hall a SLAM. Gabe and Crystal both jump up.

They run to the hall.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

They run to Ruth's bedroom. It's empty.

CRYSTAL

Gabe, look.

Crystal points down the hall. The door to the den is open.

INT. DEN - NIGHT

Crystal and Gabe walk in. The typewriter is still there.

CRYSTAL

How did she get in here?

Gabe looks down at the typewriter. There's something typed on the page.

CRYSTAL (cont'd)

What does it say?

GABE

I'm coming to get you. We're getting out of there. For good.

CRYSTAL

Where did she go?

Gabe looks around. He looks into the hall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GABE

RUTH! Ruth, answer me. This isn't funny, come on, answer me RUTH!

CRYSTAL

I'll look in the backyard. You go look in the garage.

Crystal and Gabe run out.

INT. RUTH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ruth looks around, disoriented.

She hears Cynthia coming down the hall.

CYNTHIA

RUTH! Ruth, answer me. This isn't funny, come on, answer me RUTH!

Ruth dives down and crawls under the bed. Cynthia looks in. She's holding a KNIFE.

CYNTHIA (cont'd)

I just want to talk.

Ruth takes a cellphone out of her pocket. She sends a text message to Gabe.

RUTH (TEXT MESSAGE)

I NEED HELP! I think Mom is going to hurt me. Please come pick me up. I'll meet you out front. DO NOT COME INSIDE.

Ruth sends the message. She crawls out from under the bed.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ruth runs down the hallway. She hears something and she jumps into the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ruth closes the door and locks it.

CYNTHIA (O.S.)

Ruth? You in there? Can you please open the door?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ruth climbs out the bathroom window.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Crystal tries to open the door the bathroom. Gabe walks up.

GABE
Is she in there?

CRYSTAL
Yeah. It's locked.

GABE
I have a key. I'll go get it.

Gabe runs off.

CRYSTAL
Ruth? I know you're scared. And
confused. But we only want to help.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

The bathroom is empty. The window sits open. The door opens
and Gabe holds a key ring in his hand.

CRYSTAL
She's gone.

GABE
Shit!

Gabe and Crystal run off.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

Ruth makes her way through the backyard.

CYNTHIA (O.S.)
Why are you hiding from me? Does it
make you feel good to hurt me like
this? You must enjoy torturing the
one person who has never given up on
you, despite all the SHIT you've
done. And where do you think you'll
go? With Gabe? With that PSYCHO? You
do realize you'll come crawling back
after you find out how truly fucked
up he is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ruth makes her way to the back door.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ruth slowly sneaks back in. She tip toes out to the living room.

A moment later, Gabe and Crystal walk in.

GABE

RUTH!

CRYSTAL

How do we keep missing her?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ruth walks for the front door.

CYNTHIA

RUTH!

Ruth spins around. Cynthia RUNS at her. Ruth screams and runs outside.

EXT. FRONT YARD - NIGHT

Ruth runs across the yard. Down the street, GABE comes speeding up in his car.

Ruth sprints for the street. Cynthia runs after her.

Ruth makes it to the car. She jumps inside.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Ruth closes the door and locks it.

RUTH

I am so happy to see you.

Cynthia runs up and SLAMS on the door.

RUTH (cont'd)

Drive! Drive! Get out of here!

Gabe hits the gas and they drive off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GABE
What happened?

RUTH
I made it. I'm free.

In VOICE OVER car breaks SQUEAL and then a THUD followed by a scream. But Ruth doesn't notice. She's just grinning, filled with joy to finally be free.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A car is stopped in the middle of the street. The DRIVER gets out.

DRIVER
Oh my god! Oh my god! Somebody call
9-1-1-!

Crystal and Gabe RACE over. Crystal is calling 9-1-1.

Ruth, having been hit by the car, lays in the street. Gabe kneels down beside her.

DRIVER (cont'd)
She just ran out in front of me!

GABE
Ruth? Can you hear me?

RUTH
(smiling)
I made it. I'm free.

Fade to black.

EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY

Gabe installs a FOR SALE sign in the front yard. His phone rings.

GABE
Hello?

RUTH (V.O.)
Hey, it's me.

GABE
Ruth! Hey, it's so good to hear from
you. How are you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RUTH (V.O.)

I'm doing good. I've been talking to the doctors and they've got me on some medication.

Crystal comes outside.

GABE

Ruth's on the phone.

Gabe puts it on speakerphone.

GABE (cont'd)

What did the doctors say?

RUTH (V.O.)

They said I have complex PTSD and D-I-D.

CRYSTAL

What's D-I-D?

RUTH (V.O.)

Dissociative identity disorder. They said it's been happening since I was a kid. It's why I have no memories of Dad.

GABE

How soon can you come home?

RUTH (V.O.)

Pretty soon. How are you guys?

CRYSTAL

We're doing good. We met with a real estate agent and we put the house up for sale.

RUTH (V.O.)

Hey, um, I just want to say how sorry I am. I don't remember all of what happened, but I know I hurt you both.

CRYSTAL

You don't have to apologize. We love you and we just want you to come home.

GABE

Yeah, get your butt back. George misses you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RUTH (V.O.)
I gotta go. They're calling us to
dinner.

Gabe and Crystal say bye and hangup.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The living room is full of moving boxes as they prepare to go. Some are labeled DONATE.

CRYSTAL
I'm going to load these up in the
car.

Crystal picks up one of the donation boxes.

EXT. DRIVE WAY - DAY

Crystal walks back toward the house. Gabe comes out with the typewriter.

CRYSTAL
What are you doing?

GABE
I don't want this to be here when she
gets back.

CRYSTAL
Are you sure about that? Maybe we
should talk to her doctor.

GABE
I don't care what they say, it's
going.

CRYSTAL
Yeah. You're right.

Crystal walks inside. Gabe puts the typewriter in the car. He closes the door.

As he walks away he hears a CLACK.

He stops. He almost turns back but doesn't.